

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Deb EDDY

48TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Failed transportation package—what now? Looking at how we plan our roads and transit

No, I wasn't surprised that Proposition 1 failed. The nature of your questions before the ballot indicated that the proposal was too big and too complex.

Although it is unlikely that we'll settle the question in a short 60-day session, we still need to talk about how we manage transportation. Currently, we deal with mobility, getting people and goods from Point A to Point B, in such a fragmented way that it's amazing it works at all. At no point do we deal with planning, prioritizing and funding transportation as *a system*.

We will get more value out of existing transportation dollars when (1) coordination of the entire system, its design and operation, is *required*, not optional, (2) there are actual elected and/or appointed officials *accountable for decisions and results*, and (3) we have identified a new set of *performance measures*, so it's clear whether we are meeting our goals.

Also, I think an identifiable regional transportation agency will do much to improve public trust. If I, as your elected representative, don't know who's in charge, who to vote for or complain to when things go wrong ... then how in the world can I ask you to trust us with more money?

LATE NEWS: Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen's Senate Bill 6772, changing Sound Transit's board and giving them road authorities, is not the right approach, at least as drafted.

Replacing the SR 520 Bridge

Caution: On this issue, the devil is in the details



The bridge is still the top priority for most of us in the 48th District. Just before session opened, Governor Gregoire announced her funding plan for the Evergreen Point Bridge, which includes variable tolls potentially beginning in 2009.

I accept that tolling will be necessary in this corridor and, eventually, throughout the region. However, the



Governor's plan, coupled with news about diminished prospects for light rail in the future, presents problems.

Eastside communities, in particular, have wanted the bridge rebuilt in a way that does not burden our children with problems that we should have addressed. Thus, cities and business interests have insisted that the bridge be structurally sufficient to support high capacity transit in the future.

Yet in January, Mayor Greg

Nickels, now chair of the federated Sound Transit board, made it clear that the SR 520 corridor may never see light rail. That's news to many of those involved in the 10-year planning effort, and the future of HCT in this corridor must be addressed – soon.

Variable tolling

Variable tolling has proven a sure congestion-buster, world-wide. By distributing travel demand more efficiently, it also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, so it's a win-win. The Puget Sound Regional Council completed an extensive program last year, the Traffic Choices Study, with a cohort of local citizens to test a version of the theory here.

Not surprisingly, the volunteer households participating in the program found themselves planning their travel differently.

But implementing this new and powerful tool, with real people and real money, requires public outreach.

You need to be engaged in the discussion of how tolling will be deployed in a principled, equitable way — and I will work to ensure you get that chance.



Perhaps inevitably, this topic takes me back to governance reform, how we manage our entire transportation system. The Legislature should not be micro-managing the transportation system here in the Puget Sound, but in the absence of any credible multi-modal planning and decision-making, that's where we are and what we're doing.

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Town Hall Meeting

February 9th – 10:00 AM
Kirkland City Hall

March 22nd – 10:00 AM
Bellevue City Hall

Come share your ideas on the issues!

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Dear Neighbors,

Every legislative session has its successes, its failures and its “what were they thinking” moments.

At the state level, every legislator is entitled to file as many bills on as many topics as he or she likes, whether or not it's a good idea or likely to gain support. The media highlights the more colorful or outrageous proposals, as they make great stories, even with little chance of passage.

Take comfort in knowing we don't actually spend a lot of time on these bills. Our time goes to bills we're sponsoring, bills before our committees or bills flagged as critically important to the people in our district.

No surprise, I spend a lot of time on transportation and land use. My new assignment as vice chair of the Technology, Energy and Communications Committee will require extra hours, as all three subject areas need attention.

Any spare time is spent talking about education issues with my seatmate, Rep. Hunter, and supporting his Herculean efforts to make some progress on math standards and education funding formulas.

My bills this year include a response to the rather shocking indecent exposure incidents which plagued the eastside communities last year, a bill protecting your privacy if you carry one of the new enhanced drivers' licenses and some bills that will encourage more housing development.

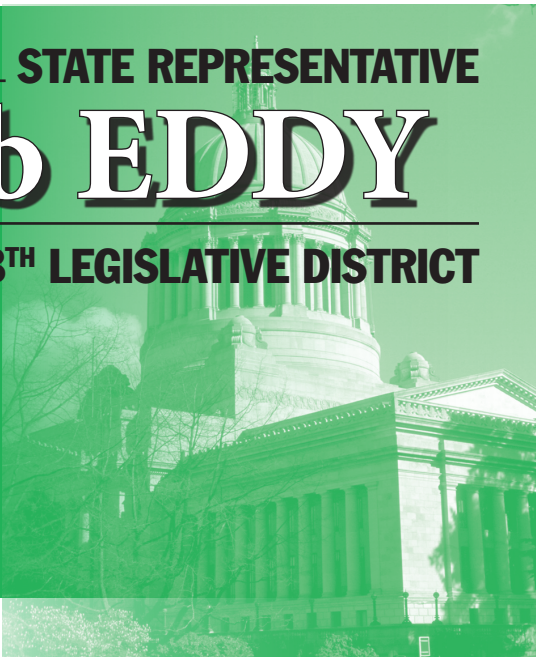
As usual, I welcome your thoughts and encourage you to continue to call, email or even drop by the office, if you're in Olympia during session. If you read something in this newsletter that interests you or that you have questions about, email me directly for a quick response. Also, let me know if you'd like to receive email updates during session; I'll put you on the list.

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Better laws to target sex offenders

The governor’s sex offender task force has released their recommendations and the Legislature will be acting on many of them this session. Some of the proposals I support:

- ✓ Collect DNA from all current and future registered sex offenders
- ✓ Expand community notification for Level I sex offenders
- ✓ Require in person verification of sex offenders’ locations

Our sex offender laws are some of the toughest in the nation, but we need to continue addressing loopholes.

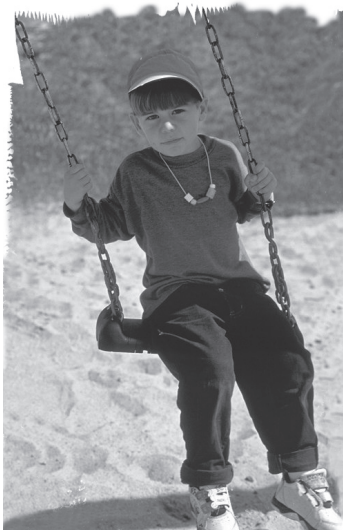


Going after people targeting children

The most disturbing issue that’s been brought to me as a legislator is the incident of a predator exposing himself to children on school grounds, but being guilty of misdemeanor indecent exposure. Working with some really motivated local families, I’ve developed two bills that will change the outcome of this sort of crime.



I have written one bill, HB 2728, that ensures that people guilty of sexually motivated indecent exposure will be added to the sexual predator registry. I’ve also been working with a colleague on HB 2715, legislation to add 24 months to the sentences of people committing sex offenses in school zones.



Passing both these bills will help protect our kids by enhancing the consequences of these crimes.

The hard work and energy of people here in the 48th district ensured that these bills will pass this year. Check out Communities Against Predators, www.wash-cap.org. I have sincerely enjoyed working with this local group of parents and applaud them, especially chair Bethan Tuttle, for their hard work and dedication to

protecting our kids. This is true grass-roots advocacy.

Managing the public’s money

Revenue (income) and appropriations (spending) are two sides of the same coin.

It’s evident that property taxes, a major source of funds for education, will remain a top concern. Some sort of reform, including a homestead exemption or the new circuit breaker idea, will be discussed in Rep. Hunter’s Finance Committee. I’ll work with him to improve our state citizens’ ability to stay in their homes.



The budget addresses state responsibilities in education, public safety and health care, among other priorities. Of about 4,000 new state employees added last year, roughly 1,340 of them were in education, mostly higher education. About another 1,100 were allocated to human services—our public safety and corrections system. That leaves about 1,560 new employees distributed to all other departments. Some of those new positions probably could have been funded by attrition or re-assessing staffing needs.

There are a growing number of us in the Legislature – many from the east-side – with city or county budgeting experience. We are used to reviewing entire departmental budgets, so that requested additions are seen in context.



Given the sheer numbers of pages and people involved, it’s unrealistic to think that all of us will ever know all aspects of the state budget. It is realistic to think that committees of us can go beyond reviewing the incremental increases and decreases, as now presented, and can dig deeper. No amount of audits, financial or performance, will ever substitute for the policy judgment that we are elected to exercise.

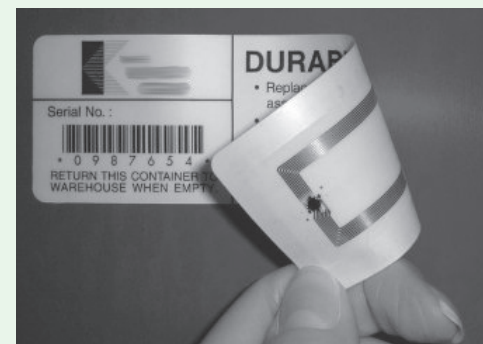
Privacy safeguards in new technologies

This session, I will work to ensure that our new enhanced drivers’ license isn’t used in ways that invade your privacy. HB 2729 prohibits the scanning of these RFID-bearing cards without your express permission, physically handing the card over. Businesses can ask for your drivers’ license to verify authenticity or age, but they won’t be able to capture your RFID identifier and then invisibly “ping” you later, for their own purposes.

Some people see no harm in applying the wireless tracking attribute of RFID to us, personally and physically. After all, we’re trying to get the bad guys, right?

Right.

But the 4th Amendment protects us from unreasonable search and seizure. What happens if the government can “search” us without our knowledge?



Many people think that our privacy is already illusory, a leftover from an era when our forefathers could blend into the anonymity of America. Having fled overbearing regimes for freedom in this country, they valued their individual privacy in ways that may seem quaint today. With

advances in technology plus the security concerns occasioned by global terrorism, we now accept intrusion as part of the fabric of modern life. But signing up for the new state license shouldn’t mean opening the door to Big Brother.

Ben Franklin warned that “if we restrict liberty to attain security, we will lose them both.” At the moment, I am not convinced that the new enhanced drivers’ license offers any advantage sufficient to offset its risks.

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